

Application no. 10/024,645
Amendment dated: July 20, 2005
Reply to office action dated: April 20, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Reconsideration and allowance of these claims in light of the arguments herein is respectfully requested.

Introduction

The present invention relates to privacy management systems for a telecommunication system such as the public switched telephone network. Privacy management systems have been developed which interrupt a call before completion to a subscriber when the caller's directory number is not available. The "calling line identification" or CLID may be blocked intentionally by the caller or by the system. As is explained in the Background section of the present application, page 2, line 20 – page 3, line 7, some unscrupulous customers of telecommunication systems have learned how to bypass some previous privacy management systems by providing invalid directory numbers.

...subscribers that interface with network equipment via Primary Rate Interface Trunk Groups have the ability to illegally manipulate the ten digit directory number that is placed in the Calling Party ID field of the set up message that is communicated by the network. Instead of the true calling party information, such subscribers can place, for example, all zeroes, all ones, numbers having fewer than ten digits, ten digit numbers that begin with a 0 or 1. Alternatively, such callers can place an invalid Numbering Plan Area (NPA) or area code number, plus seven digits, in the Calling Party ID field.

In any of these cases, and by not blocking the entry by setting the entry to presentation allowed, the call will bypass the system of the incorporated patent applications and will be presented to the called party. Subscribers to the service will see displayed on their Caller ID equipment the phony directory number and an unknown name. This shields the identity of the calling party from the service subscriber.

Page 2, line 21 – page 3, line 4. By using an invalid number in the signaling information that is part of the call, the privacy management system of the called party is defeated. These systems which pass the call if the CLID information is present can not detect the invalid CLID.

The present invention solves this problem. Before the call is completed, during processing by the privacy management service, the CLID is tested to ensure that the calling party identification represents a valid directory number. In one network embodiment, an SCP performs one or more validity tests on the calling directory number. If an invalid directory

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number is detected, the SCP routes the call to a service which requires that the calling party state a name for playback to the called party or enter an access code. The SCP detects the directory number to which a terminating attempt trigger is assigned and places this directory number in a parameter for transmission to the SSP using a forward_call message. The SCP prompts the calling party to provide audible caller identification information. The called party is then advised of the incoming call. In this manner, callers who seek to bypass the privacy management service used by subscribers are blocked before completion of the call.

Double patenting rejection

Claims 10-15 stand rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-8 of U.S. patent number 6,341,161. According to the office action, the claims are not identical but are not patentably distinct from each other because "claims 1-8 of U.S. patent number 6,341,161 in view of U.S. patent number 5,497,414 to Bartholomew ("Bartholomew") clearly read on claims 10-15 of this pending application." This rejection is respectfully traversed. The present invention includes important features which distinguish this invention over the cited reference.

According to the office action, the North American Numbering Plan specifies a 10-digit telephone number format. Bartholomew discloses detecting the calling party's address and comparing the detected calling party number with the CPR (column 6, line 5-20 and col. 6, line 60 - col. 7, line 18)). The cited passage describes one version of call processing as customized by a subscriber. In the described version, a called party number CPN is compared with entries in a Call Processing Record. If there is no match, the call is blocked. Further, if the CPN matches a blocked number in the CPR, the call is blocked.

However, Bartholomew does not disclose or suggest "at the SCP, determining whether the caller identification information is valid," as recited by claim 10. Bartholomew's system only compares CPNs with the numbers stored in the CPR. There is no validity check on the number. The described Bartholomew system requires a service subscriber to laboriously populate the CPR with caller numbers that are permitted to pass and be completed to the subscriber. The only way the call will be completed, in this version, is if the CPN matches a number which has been stored in the CPR.

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Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by claims 10-15 is not just a variation on the disclosure of U.S. patent number 6,341,161. Bartholomew, even in combination with the standardized numbering plan, does not render obvious the invention of claim 10. Number validity is not checked in these references. Doing so, however, provides significant advantages to the privacy management service subscriber. Accordingly, withdrawal of the obviousness-type double patenting rejection of claims 10-15 is respectfully requested.

Claims 19-20 stand rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-8 of U.S. patent number 6,766,003. According to the office action, "although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 1-9 of U.S. patent number 6,766,003 clearly read on claims 19-20 of this pending application."

Claim 19 recites, in part, "a service control point (SCP) operative to determine whether Calling Party ID information is valid and if not, to initiate a forward call message." U.S. patent number 6,766,003 does not disclose this feature. As noted above, determining the validity of the Calling Party ID information provides unique features for a privacy management service. In particular, the validity check prevents callers who can manipulate a ten-digit directory number that is placed in the Calling Party ID field for a call from bypassing the privacy management system. This is a distinctive aspect not suggested by the cited reference. It is submitted that the invention defined by claims 19-20 is not just a variation on the disclosure of U.S. patent number 6,766,003. Withdrawal of the obviousness-type double patenting rejection of these claims is respectfully requested.

Prior art rejections

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent number 5,905,774 to Tatchell, et al. ("Tatchell"). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Tatchell fails to disclose "determining if calling party identification information is valid," as recited by claim 1. The present application gives examples of validity determination throughout the application and in particular in FIG. 4 and at page 14, line 27 through page 16, line 14.

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Based on the assumption that the NPA-NXX-XXXX convention is used, one example is inspecting the first digit of the Calling Party ID. If the first digit is a 0 or 1, the number is not valid. A second example is comparing the first three digits of the Calling Party ID or the NPA with the contents of a Valid NPA Table. Other checks may be performed but the goal is detecting calling party identification information that does not have the form or content to be properly processed by the privacy management system.

In contrast to checking *validity* of calling party identification information, Tatchell describes *verifying* information about the call. At column 20, lines 39-57, Tatchell discloses

verification of the subscriber's call screening and prioritization parameters are verified before further routing the call. First the agent verifies whether the incoming call is voice or data 88 (col. 20, lines 45-48)

a check is made 89 to determine if it has a CLID (col. 20, lines 49-50)

If a CLID is received, a determination is made to see if it is specified by the subscriber in the call screening and prioritization list (col. 20, lines 52-54)

if no call screening and prioritization is specified by the user, the agent then *verifies call announcement option settings* (col. 20, lines 54-56 and 59-62)

Other determinations are made during this processing, but it is clear that at no time does the disclosed method "determine[e] if calling party identification information is valid" as the term "valid" is used in the present application, that is, to detect calling party identification information that does not have the form or content to be properly processed by the privacy management system.

Accordingly, Tatchell fails to disclose all the limitations of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Tatchell in view of Bartholomew. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Each of claims 3-8 are dependent from claim 1. As noted above, Tatchell does not disclose "determining if calling party identification information is valid" as recited by claim 1 and as the term "valid" is used in the present application. As is also noted above, Bartholomew does not provide the missing teaching.

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Bartholomew's system only compares CPNs with the numbers stored in the CPR. There is no validity check on the number.

Accordingly, claims 3-8 are allowable over the cited art. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of these claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 9 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Tatchell in view of U.S. patent number 6,816,581 to Simpson, et al. ("Simpson"). Claims 17-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Tatchell in view Simpson and further in view of Bartholomew. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Simpson relates to a privacy management system in which a call is suspended before completion. A service node places a second call to the called directory number and detects if a voice mail system answers the call. The voice mail system and the service node then coordinate answering the call (Abstract).

However, Simpson does not provide the missing teaching. Claim 9 is dependent from claim 1. As noted above, Tatchell does not disclose "determining if calling party identification information is valid" as recited by claim 1 and as the term "valid" is used in the present application. Further, as explained above, Bartholomew does not disclose this limitation either. Bartholomew's system only compares CPNs with the numbers stored in the CPR. There is no validity check on the number. Simpson similarly fails to disclose any sort of validity check.

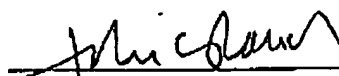
Accordingly, claim 9 is allowable over the cited art. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claim 9 is respectfully requested.

With respect to claims 16-18, independent claim 16 recites "means for determining whether caller identification information of the call for the calling communication station is valid." As discussed in more detail above, the cited references fail to disclose any structure which performs this function. Claims 17-18 are dependent from claim 16 and add further limitations thereto, and are allowable for the same reasons. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections of claims 16-18 is respectfully requested.

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With this response, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the examiner deem a telephone conference to be of assistance in advancing the application to allowance, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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